

25X1

Copy 70 of 12

NRO, USN & USAF REVIEWS COMPLETED

23 July 1961

**MEMORANDUM FOR : Deputy for Field Activities, Office of Special Activities**

**SUBJECT : Carrier Training Exercise with USS KITTY HAWK  
(Unclassified Code Name WHALE TALE)**

1. Following my visit of 17 and 18 July to Lockheed and to NAS, North Island, San Diego with reference to the projected carrier launch operation of a U-2, I can report the following information which should be of assistance to you in planning for implementing this activity.

A. Although we had hoped to be able to run the launch operation on 2 and 3 August, because of commitments for in-port repairs to the KITTY HAWK, we were told on arriving at North Island that invitations had already gone out to 1,500 ship's crew members for a dependents' cruise from San Diego on the morning of 3 August. This made it mandatory that we change our dates to 4 and 5 August with the actual launch to take place on the morning of the fifth.

25X1  
B. [redacted] and the undersigned met with Vice Admiral Paul D. Stroup, USN, COMNAVAIRPAC, the morning of 18 July and briefed him on the operation. Admiral Stroup has cognizance over the First Fleet under whom the KITTY HAWK comes. Admiral Stroup was very cooperative and said that he would arrange to brief and instruct Vice Admiral Taylor Keith, Commander First Fleet, when the latter returned from Pearl Harbor 19 July to insure that the minor change in carrier scheduling required to permit the WHALE TALE Operation would be accomplished. FYI Admiral Stroup had an IDEALIST clearance during his recent tour in the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations and was quite familiar with the parameters of the U-2. Admiral Stroup designated as the central

Page 2

point of contact on his staff for WHALE TALE Captain George C. Duncan, USN, Chief of Staff to COMNAVAIRPAC.

C. In company with Captain Duncan, following the briefing of Admiral Strong, [redacted] the undersigned, and [redacted] visited the KITTY HAWK with [redacted] whom Kelly Johnson proposes will fly the trial in Article 151. The KITTY HAWK was tied up at the pier at North Island, and [redacted] and the undersigned met in the shipper's cabin to brief in Captain Duncan's presence Captain Morace H. Epes, USN. Captain Epes was most cooperative and attentive throughout the briefing and assured us of his wholehearted support for the operation. Some of the salient points covered with Captain Epes were:

(1) He would like to put his Communications Officer, a Lt. Commander Anderson or Henderson, I believe, in touch with [redacted] so that together they might work out communications procedures and call signs to be used on the day of the launch. Captain Epes suggested that [redacted] plan to visit the KITTY HAWK this week for this purpose. It will be getting underway on 24 July from San Diego for certain nichores operations. The Captain suggested that [redacted] report to the KITTY HAWK the evening of 23 July and go aboard, remaining there to observe carrier communications procedures on the 24th when air operations will be conducted. The Captain said that he would arrange to have [redacted] flown back to land from the carrier after his discussions were completed.

(2) Captain Epes said there will be a minimum crew aboard the KITTY HAWK for the trial run on 3 August, consisting largely of the basic ship's crew plus a modest number in the Air Department. He felt that this would be sufficient to support our operations and still give us enough room to have a workable operating party and observers on board when the carrier moves out on the morning of 3 August. It is the Captain's proposal that they move into the Channel at 0700

Page 3

hours PDST and steam westward out of sight of land, presumably something like 50 to 60 miles for the launch. He was of the view that the entire operation could be completed and the carrier back at the pier in North Island by 1400 hours, barring some mechanical problem with the aircraft.

(3) Captain Epes plans to brief only very senior members of his staff on the purpose of the launch, and to the balance of the crew he will simply indicate that what is going on is to be considered as not only classified information, but restricted from passage to others, since it is an ONR project of concern to the Navy. Photography by ship's crew will be prohibited during the time the U-2 is on board the KITTY HAWK. At the same time the Captain has offered full support from his photographic detachment of all steps in the loading, fueling, launch, and aircraft movement operation both in still photography and 16mm color as requested. In addition, he will make available to us television pictures of the pre-launch operations on the elevator and flight decks, as well as the launching and simulated landing approaches planned for the operation. These television pictures are taken from a point of vantage just beneath the primary fly bridge on the aft end of the island, and Video tapes of the entire operation will be given to us for retention. The television vantage point overlooks the Number 1 starboard elevator aft which will be employed in the operation.

(4) Although Captain Epes offered to furnish us his own MD-3 starter carts (an improved version of the MA-2 cart),  agreed with the Captain that LAC would furnish their air transportable starter cart for the operation. In addition, Lockheed will also provide an LAC fuel truck capacity unknown but over 5,000 gallons, which will be driven from Burbank to North Island to be in position there on Saturday, 3 August. This will contain the fuel needed for the launch operation.

Page 4

(3) Navy will look to us to establish whatever coordination we feel is necessary with the Los Angeles Center of FAA as it bears upon the normal requirement to file an FAA flight plan for any flight originating on a carrier and terminating at a RI installation. This coordination with FAA should also include suppression of positive control radars, if you feel this is required. Navy will also look to us to coordinate this operation with NORAD as it bears upon flights within the ADIZ in which the carrier will be operating. At present the tentative launch time, everything being equal, would be between 1030 and 1100 hours on the morning of 5 August.

B. Kelly Johnson told me that he expected his party requiring accommodations on board the KITTY HAWK for the night of 4 August would number 10 or 11 to include himself,

and presumably a full LAC crew. Whether this crew comes from Burbank or Edwards should be left to you to work out with . As discussed with Captain Duncan, the plan we laid on would call for the arrival of the U-2 from Burbank at a time just prior to official sunset when light was adequate to permit an easy landing at North Island. Runways there are approximately 7,000 feet in length, and the prevailing wind is out of the direction of 290 degrees. However, since the entire airfield at North Island is adequate for landing (it's an old Navy landing MAT field), the prevailing winds should be no problem. It is then proposed that 351 be taxied beyond base operations to the access runway leading to the aircraft carrier docking area. The access taxiway is more than adequate in width in maneuvering under tow. The Navy will furnish an aircraft tug, and Lockheed will make available a U-2 tow bar. Distance from the access taxiway is probably on the order of half a mile. The aircraft would be towed right up to the position abaft of the Number 3 elevator starboard aft, at which point Captain Duncan says the base will be prepared to defuel the aircraft as required by LAC before hoisting. The Lockheed crew will then move the aircraft on to the hoisting cart, and the gantry crane at dockside will hoist it aboard the flight deck. Prior to moving the aircraft on the flight deck, the same crane will have

Page 5

25X1

lifted the fuel truck and the LOWBOY dolly cart to the flight deck off of the island. The angle of the gantry crane on the flight deck, together with the size of the lifting hook, was checked out personally by  on the 18th and was said to be adequate.

E. Once aboard the flight deck, the LAC crew would move the aircraft to the LOWBOY dolly and tow it aboard the elevator which would then move it to the hangar deck area where it would be stowed until the carrier was at sea the morning of 5 August. Since the flight profile is a normal one, there is no requirement for pre-breathing of the pilot, and the ship's aircraft oxygen system will be adequate.

F. The Navy has guessed that the entire operation of loading the aircraft from the deck side to the flight deck and thence to the hangar deck will probably take up to two hours. You may wish to discuss with  the question of how many, if any, spare parts should be taken aboard the carrier in case there is a minor pre-flight checkout failure of some small but necessary item.

G. I am afraid I have gone into a great deal of detail here, but since I will be away when much of this is going on, I wanted to have everything which might bear upon this whole operation. As to the number of people going out with the ship on 4 August, I think that we should control that from Headquarters so that we in turn can advise  of identities and numbers in order to permit adequate billeting and feeding arrangement on board ship.  will send appropriate TEX's to COMNAVAIRFAC, Attention Captain George Duncan, CDS, under the unclassified code name WHALE TALE. Suggest you may wish to have  keep on top of this aspect of it. You should also know that Admiral Stump plans to witness the launching by going on board the carrier the morning of 5 August. I believe Kelly plans to send the hoisting cart and the LOWBOY overland to San Diego to meet up with the fuel truck there. There is a restriction on taking the loaded fuel truck on the Coronado Ferry, which means that the fuel truck will have to go overland on a somewhat longer route. I am not sure if the ferry will accommodate the LOWBOY and fuelage cart, which I assume will be on a flatbed. Suggest you check this with  as well.

25X1

[Redacted]

Page 5

25X1



25X1 4. In view of our discussions with you about weight penalties, I have  
advised [Redacted] that we would await the completion of WHALE TALE and

Page 7

25X1

evaluate the pilot report before committing ourselves to the ARS and beacon configuration for even a single aircraft. To this he seemed agreeable. As a last point, believe you may wish to invite Colonel Geary to attend this launch operation. I hope to be there myself!

**JAMES A. CUNNINGHAM, JR.**  
Deputy Assistant Director  
(Special Activities)

25X1 64: 

ADD/R  
AFICO-S

**Distribution:**

- 1 - D/TA/OSA ✓
- 2 - DAD/OSA
- 25X1 3 -
- 4 - ADD/R
- 5 - AFICO-S
- 6 - AD/OSA
- 7 - SS/OSA
- 8 - COMMO/OSA
- 9 - SAL/OSA
- 10 - MD/OSA
- 11 - D/TECH/OSA
- 12 - RB/OSA

25X1 DAD/OSA:JACunningham, Jr.

25X1